

May 27, 1969

KOSYGIN'S REPLY TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S MESSAGE

Dear Mr. President:

I and my colleagues have attentively familiarized ourselves with your message, and also the additional considerations conveyed by Ambassador Beam.

We have received with satisfaction confirmation by you of the idea of the necessity of entering into an era of negotiations and of readiness to examine any possible path for the settlement of international problems, in particular of those which are connected with the danger of a clash and of conflicts.

This accords with our opinion, already expressed earlier to you, on the importance of achieving a situation in which negotiations would serve first of all to avert conflicts, and not to seek for ways out of them after peace and international security have been placed in jeopardy.

Such a task is completely feasible if our two countries with their resources and influence will act in the direction of maintaining and consolidating peace, with due consideration of each other's fundamental interests and without setting themselves against third countries. At the same time it is important not to permit anyone to exert pernicious influence on Soviet-American relations.

The achievement of mutual understanding in this matter is all the more necessary since our countries must take into account the character and degree of influence on the international situation also of other forces. From this point of view much that can be done now, given mutual desire, and setting aside complicating (kon yunturnye) questions, may turn out with the passage of time either to be fully unattainable or much more difficult and complex.

As far as can be judged by your statements, in principle we have with you a common understanding in this regard. It is a matter now, perhaps, of embarking on the practical realization of such an understanding, on a search for ways and means of resolving concrete problems which burden international relations at the present time and are fraught with great dangers for the future.

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In this regard, it seems to us, that, taking into account the complexity of each of these problems by itself, it is hardly worthwhile to attempt somehow to link one with another. Although it is indisputable that progress in solving each problem taken individually would facilitate the solving also of other problems, it would be unjustified in our view to draw from this a conclusion about the advisability of making the solution of one problem dependent on the solution of any other problem or of postponing in general their examination until there is some sort of general improvement in Soviet-American relations or in the international situation as a whole. Such a posing of the question would inevitably lead to the emergence of a vicious circle and would in no way facilitate the solving of problems which have become ripe for this.

We have already transmitted to you through Ambassador Dobrynin our observations on a number of international problems and on questions of Soviet-American bilateral relations. In connection with your message we would like in addition to express the following thoughts.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the NPT]

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We, Mr. President, are not at all against an improvement also of Soviet-West German relations. And the practical steps which have been undertaken by us in this direction are obviously known to you. Unfortunately, however, in the FRG the understanding still has not apparently matured that its relations with other countries, including those with the USSR, cannot be developed apart from the general foreign policy course of Bonn. And the fact that this course still is based on these which are contrary to the goals of strengthening European security and world peace is confirmed in particular by the attitude of the FRG toward the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. After all, it is precisely the stubborn refusal of Western Germany to accede to the treaty -- with whatever contrived pretext it fortifies itself -- which greatly impedes its entry into force. We hope that the United States is using its influence in order to secure the most rapid accession to the treaty by the FRG and by a number of other countries allied with the USA. As regards the ratification of the treaty by the Soviet Union, the matter is not up to us (to za nami delo nye stanet).

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the NPT]

In conclusion, I would like once again to stress our readiness to develop relations with the USA in a constructive plane on the basis of mutual confidence and frankness. In this connection, we consider useful the practice which has developed of a confidential exchange of views on topical international problems and on questions of Soviet-American relations. In this regard we agree with you, Mr. President, that in different situations -- depending on the character of the questions and on other considerations -- one must apply different forms and utilize various channels for such an exchange of views.

With respect,

A. Kosygin

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